



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SEPTEMBER 29, 1960

#### INTERIOR PREPARES TO LOG WHOOPING CRANES ON SOUTHWARD MIGRATION

The Department of the Interior has alerted Fish and Wildlife Service personnel from Montana and North Dakota to Texas to help log the progress of the whooping cranes on their southward migration. This is the second year for the systematic logging of the flight.

The Department is also soliciting the help of State and private conservation agencies and individuals who may spot whooping cranes at rest or in flight. Any person seeing a big white bird with black wingtips, with a wing spread of from five to seven feet and about five feet from the head to foot should relay the information to the nearest Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife installation or employee, or to a State conservation agent. The birds usually migrate in small groups, sometimes in pairs and on rare instances alone.

The purpose of logging the flight is two-fold. It affords better protection for the birds on the current flight and it gives migration information which can aid in implementing future flights.

The Denver Wildlife Research Center of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife is the clearing house for this information. As the data accumulates over the years, Bureau biologists will determine possible flight patterns and compile any information which will help in assuring the safety of the birds during migration.

Last winter there were 39 whooping cranes known to be in existence. Of these, 33 were wild and had spent the winter at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas and on coastal islands nearby. Of the six birds in captivity, five were in the New Orleans zoo--Josephine and Crip and three of their progeny. The sixth was at the zoo in San Antonio.

Only 31 whoopers migrated north this year, two choosing to remain on or near the Aransas refuge. Reports from Canada indicate that four young whoopers have been sighted during the summer.

The whoopers nest in Wood Buffalo Park, just south of Great Slave Lake in Canada, about 2,500 miles from the wintering grounds. Arrival of the birds at Aransas ranges from early October to mid-December.

x x x